

## **Traffic crashes are costly in many ways**

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning's *Summer of Safety* campaign aims to reduce injuries and save lives during this busy travel season. In addition to the pain and suffering caused by traffic crashes, the negative economic impact is staggering. There are legal and court costs, medical expenses, emergency service costs, lost productivity, insurance administration costs, property damage, and workplace losses.

Helping employees avoid motor vehicle crash injuries is a wise investment of time and resources. In fact, eliminating unrestrained and impaired driving could cut employer costs by \$15 billion nationwide each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The *Summer of Safety* campaign addresses both of these persistent problems in Michigan through the *Click It or Ticket* and *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* crackdowns.

Traffic crashes are a leading cause of death in the United States. More than 2.5 million drivers and passengers were treated in emergency departments after being injured in motor vehicle crashes in 2012. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that costs of medical care and productivity losses associated with injuries from motor vehicle crashes exceeded \$80 billion in a one-year period.

Buckling up makes a tremendous difference. Seat belts saved an estimated 12,584 fatalities in the United States in 2013. By preventing deaths and injuries, NHTSA said seat belt use saves \$50 billion in medical care, lost productivity, and other injury-related costs.

The impact of alcohol also takes a huge toll. NHTSA found that alcohol-involved crashes nationwide resulted in more than 13,000 fatalities and \$52 billion in economic costs during 2010.

The societal costs of traffic crashes are felt here in Michigan. A study by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute showed that traffic crashes resulted in more than \$9 billion in total costs, even exceeding the societal costs associated with crime.

Employers share the costs of traffic crashes with government, insurers, and individual crash victims. Millions of workdays are lost each year.

Here's the good news. Many fatalities and injuries are easily prevented. Remember to buckle up, every ride, every time. Never drive while impaired. Following these basic precautions will save lives and reduce costs.

These are great habits for the summer and every other season of the year.

Does it make sense to follow these safety tips? Absolutely. After checking the bottom line, you really can't afford to do anything else.